

JAMES RIVER INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

MAP 1

COLUMBIA, GOOCHLAND COUNTY TO
HUGUENOT BRIDGE, RICHMOND CITY

YOUR GUIDE TO THE JAMES RIVER
INCLUDING SAFETY TIPS, HISTORIC SITES, AND
INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION

LANDINGS

Columbia Landing is on the river right in Cumberland County where Rt. 690 crosses the river to intersect with Rt. 6 at Columbia in Fluvanna County. This landing also provides take out for trips on the Rivanna River, which flows into the James River immediately upstream. This area is known for its good fishing and paddling. It is 9.5 miles to Cartersville, approximately 5 hours paddle time. The river here is mostly flat water with no danger points.

Cartersville Landing is on river right in Cumberland County, on Rt. 45 where it crosses the river to intersect with Rt. 6 at George's Tavern in Goochland County. There is a general store in Cartersville, also a river flow gage on river left. It is 5 miles to Westview – approximately 3 hours paddle time. This is a flat stretch of river bounded on river right by steep, heavily wooded hillsides.

Westview Landing is on river left at the end of Rt. 643. An island separates the landing from the main channel and should be approached from upstream.

There is no bridge here. To reach Rt. 6 from the landing, take a dirt road to Rt. 643 and turn left on to Rt. 600 (approximately 5 miles). Westview has a small store that also rents canoes. There are several small islands and a series of Class I riffles between miles 2 and 5. Here the James meanders between wooded hills and agricultural flood plains. It is 12.5 miles to the Maiden's Landing paddle time, 4 to 6 hours.

Maiden's Landing is on river right. Take Rt. 6 to U.S. 522, cross the bridge, and turn right on Beaumont Road. Originally called Maiden's Adventure, it was named for the legendary exploit of a young girl who crossed the river here to rescue her lover from marauding Native Americans. It is 13.1 miles to Watkins Landing - paddle time 4 to 6 hours. The middle third of the trip is particularly scenic as the river threads through numerous small islands and Class I riffles, until it reaches flat water 3 miles upstream from Watkins. **Note: This area can be difficult in low water due to exposed rocks.**

Watkins Landing is on river right. Take Robious Road (Rt. 711) to Rt. 652 (5 miles). The landing is ½ mile down the road. A general store is just west on Rt. 711. This area of the river is flat water and used heavily by motorboats, water skiers, and fisherman. It is 4 miles

to Robious Landing on river right; 5 miles to Bosher's dam portage, on river left. From the dam, it is 1 mile to Huguenot Flatwater Park, 2 miles to Pony Pasture Rapids Park and 4½ miles to Reedy Creek, all on river right. The last take-out before Class 3 and up rapids.

Robious Landing Park is just behind James River High School, off Rt. 711, 3 miles from Rt. 150. This is a large park with a slide launch that will accommodate canoes, kayaks, and rowing shells. Both a picnic shelter and restrooms are available all year.

Huguenot Flatwater Park, on river right, (part of James River Park System) has canoe access steps. A portable toilet is available from mid-May to October.



Batteaus travel the James River
in the summer for the annual
James River Bateau Festival.
Photo: David Euerette ©

POINTS OF INTEREST

COLUMBIA TO CARTERSVILLE

1. At Mile 10.5 the **Rivanna River** enters the James. The Rivanna leads to Charlottesville. Thomas Jefferson made some of the first navigation improvements to the Rivanna.

2. At Mile 11 is **Columbia Boat Access**.

3. **Columbia** was originally a Monacan village named Rassawek. The Indians were slowly pushed westward, and when English colonists moved in they renamed it Point of Fork since it was located at the confluence of the James and Rivanna rivers. After the American Revolution, in the spirit of independence, it was renamed Columbia. As its name was changed, the town's character evolved from a trading post to a shipping port, to a railroad freight center, and to a passenger station. Today, it has a general store, a few houses, and a restored train station.



Autumn spendor along the James River.
Photo: David Euerette ©

4. At mile 13 is **Elk Island**. It is mainly farmland. Many Native American artifacts have been found here.

5. **Byrd Creek Aqueduct** is visible from the north channel of Elk Island 1/10 mile up Byrd Creek. It carried the James River and Kanawha Canal over Byrd Creek.

6. At mile 14, on river right, are **concrete piers** from an old bridge.

7. At mile 15.5, on river right, is a **batteau sluice** and a little beyond is a **wing dam and wall**.

8. At mile 18, **Willis's River** enters the James from river right. In this bend of the river there are many rock ledges parallel to the flow.

9. At mile 20.5, on river right, is the **Cartersville Boat Landing**. The river gage is on river left. Also, there are stone piers of an early bridge that served wagons going between Cumberland and Goochland counties.

10. At mile 21, on river left, is the **Cartersville Connection Lock**. This lowered boats from the canal into the river so they could dock at Cartersville. A short way down stream is the **Connection Dam** that created slack water up to Cartersville for canal boats using the lock.

11. At mile 21.5, on river right, **Muddy Creek** marks the boundary between Cumberland County to the west and Powhatan County to the east.

CARTERSVILLE TO WESTVIEW

12. At mile 23.5 is **Bolling Island**. The river in this area is shallow and rocky.

13. At mile 25, on river left, **Stumbling Creek** enters the James.

14. At mile 25.1, on river left, is **Westview Landing**. Canoe and tube rentals are available across the canal from the landing.

WESTVIEW TO MAIDEN'S

15. At mile 27.4, on river left, are **Rock Castle Falls**, an ancient geological formation. For best ride, keep to the middle of the river.

16. At mile 27.2, **Deep Creek** enters the James on river right. The spire you see belongs to **St. Frances de Sales School**.

17. At mile 30, on river right, are **Red Rock Shoals**. Watch for shallows and ledges.

18. At mile 33.5, on river left, **Lickinghole Creek** enters the James. The aqueduct that carried canal water over the creek is one of the most beautiful and best preserved on the James River and Kanawha Canal.

19. At mile 34.5, on river left, is **Little Creek Culvert**, which is crossed by a twenty-foot wide stone arch, the remains of an old bridge.

20. At mile 35, on river left, is **Cedar Point**. The old white stone lock house is where canal boats were lowered into the river. The boats were then towed for 5 miles from a towpath along the riverbank down to the lock in Maiden's Adventure Dam.

21. At mile 37, on river left, is the **Town of Maiden's**. The town has a general store. The town was orginally called Maiden's Adventure after a folktale of a young girl who crossed the river at this point to rescue her lover from marauding Native Americans.

22. At mile 37.1 is the **U.S. Route 522 Bridge**. It is of medium size green steel with concrete supports.

23. At the bridge, on river right, is the **Beaumont – Maiden's boat access ramp**.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

Fishing along the James River is a
popular activity.
Photo: David Euerette ©



MAIDEN'S TO WATKINS

24. At mile 40 are the remains of **Maiden's Adventure Dam** that once fed water into the Kanawha Canal, down to downtown Richmond. A simple mound is the only surviving reminas of the canal lock, to the left of dam. The best travel route through the dam is left of center.

25. At mile 40.5 is the low, deteriorating concrete **State Farm Bridge** leading to the **James River Correctional Center**.

26. The next 3 miles of the river has many small islands, difficult to paddle in times of low flow. Remains of the **James River and Kanawha Canal wall** are visible on river left.

27. At mile 42.5, **Fine Creek** enters the river. Just upstream is **Free Negro Sluice**, named for a freed slave who lived nearby.

28. At mile 42.8 is **Pleasant's Island**, paddle the south channel.

29. At mile 43.2 is **Tom's Rock**, named for Tom Bennett who lost 2 boats on it. The next channel is close to the left bank. Just beyond is **Jude's Fish Dam**. At **Devil's Sluice**, keep to the right.



This catfish did not stand
a chance.
Photo: David Euerette ©

30. At mile 44.1, on river left, is **Genito Creek**. On river right, opposite the creek outflow is **Jude's Ferry Crossing**. Close to the shore are the remains of 2 hand-pulled ferry flat boats.

31. At mile 45, on river left, is the **Little River**, which flows in a channel around Sabot Island (the island is shaped like a shoe).

32. At mile 49, the opposite end of **Little River** is on river left and **Watkins Landing** is on river right.

WATKINS TO HUGUENOT FLATWATER PARK

33. At mile 52.5, on river left, is **Tuckahoe Plantation**, built in 1712 by Thomas Randolph. Thomas Jefferson spent many of his early childhood years at Tuckahoe. Tuckahoe is named for an edible water plant that was an important part of the Native American diet. The plantation is a national historic landmark. Owned privately, it is opened to the public by appointment only.

34. At mile 53, on river right, **Bernard Creek** enters the James.

35. At mile 53.2, on river left, **Tuckahoe Creek** enters the James.

36. **Robious Landing Park**, on river right, is just off Rt. 711. It has canoe access.

37. At mile 54, on river right, the stone ruins of **Bellona Arsenal** where cannons were manufactured during the Revolutionary War can be seen.

38. The next 3.5 miles of river is **flat water** – very popular with motor boats and water skiing. Watch out for motor boat wakes.

SAFETY TIPS

Canoeing and kayaking upon the James River is the best way to take in the majesty of our environment. Following a few simple precautions on your adventure will ensure that this treasure is enjoyed safely.

Virginia Law requires that each canoe occupant have a flotation device.

Don't forget the following items:

√ Extra paddle.

√ Extra rope to tie up the canoe in case you want to stop and rest.

√ Sun protection - a hat, sunglasses and sunblock.

√ Mosquito repellent.

√ Dry clothes and a towel, sealed in a watertight plastic bag. If you tipover, you'll want to change.

√ Food and water - canoe trips can last hours. Bring sandwiches and snacks in a cheap cooler, in case of a tipover. Remember to include plenty to drink, but NO ALCOHOL. Alcohol has a dehydrating effect, and the combined effect of drinking, the hot sun, and the work of paddling is stressful. Heat stroke is a real danger.

√ Wear shoes that can get wet.

√ Bring along something with which to bail out the canoe.

√ Trash Bags - clean up after yourself and remember to leave our fragile environment as beautiful and healthy as it was before you arrived.

IN CASE OF A TIPOVER:

Don't panic! Your canoe can be flipped back over. Over-turned canoes float. Push the canoe toward shallow water and return the canoe to the upright position and bail it out. If the water is too deep for standing, remaining with the canoe will ensure that you don't drown. Do not position yourself in front of the canoe as it goes down river so you can avoid being pinned against an obstruction. Stay away from low-hanging branches and submerged objects which are subject to strong currents. If you are swept by the flow against an obstruction, lean your body toward the obstruction instead of pushing away.

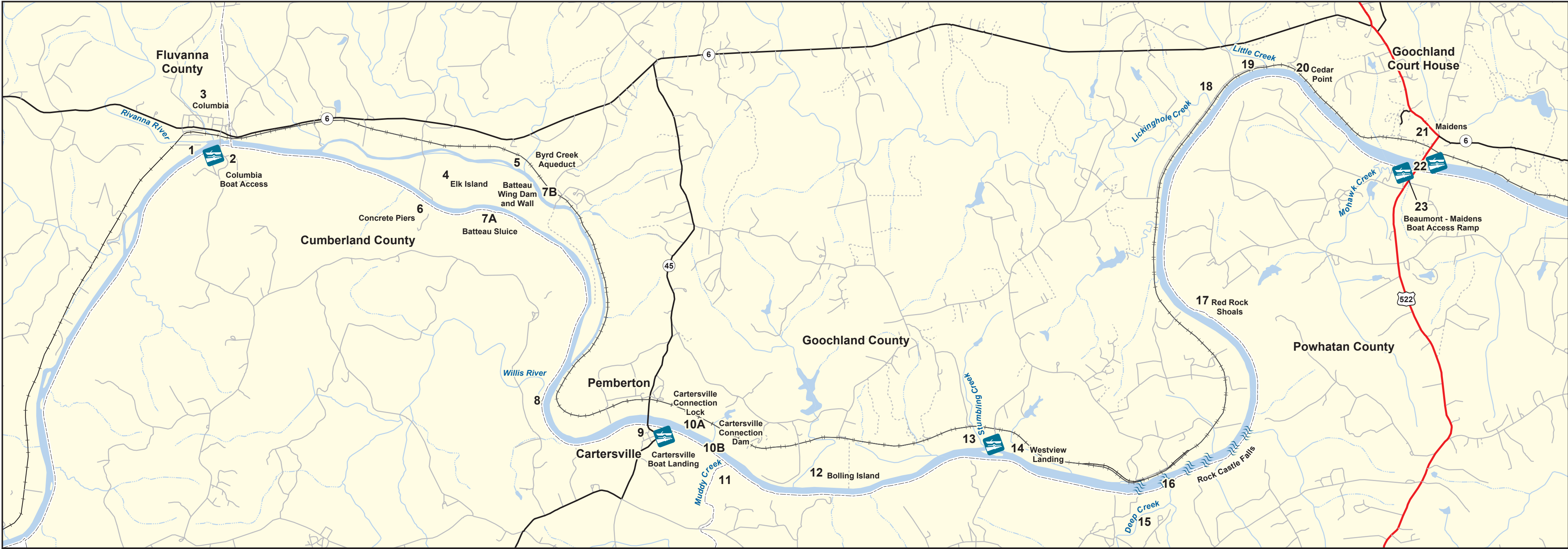
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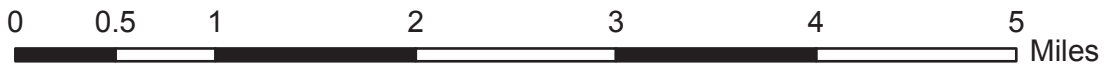
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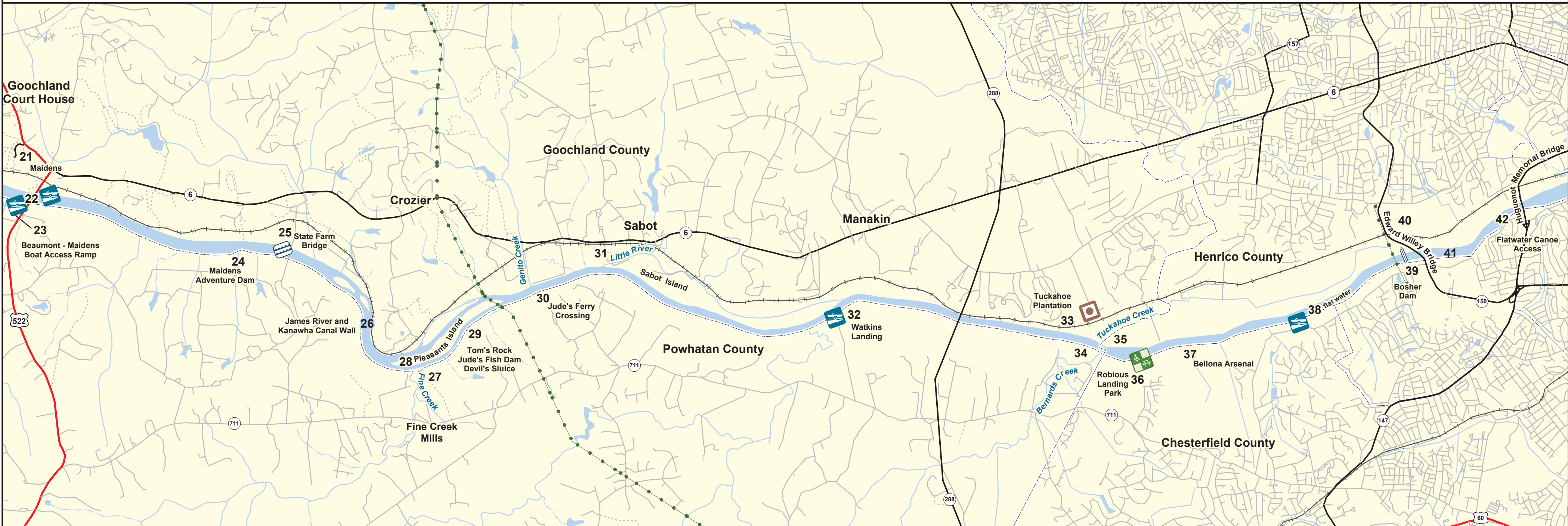
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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



- | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Boat Ramp | Historic Site | Interstate | Road | Utility |
| Rapids | Park | Highway | Drive / Trail | Water |
| Low Water Bridge | Dam | Major Road | Railroad | |



Data Sources: US Census Bureau, 2002
City of Richmond, 2005
Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, 2005
Created by: Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, September 2005
This map was partially funded by the Coastal Program of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality through NOAA grant # NA04NOS4190060-05.



JAMES RIVER INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

MAP 2
HUGUENOT BRIDGE TO
ANCARROWS LANDING BRIDGE,
RICHMOND CITY

YOUR GUIDE TO THE JAMES RIVER
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INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION

LANDINGS

Huguenot Flatwater Park, on river right, (part of James River Park System) has canoe access steps. A portable toilet is available from mid-May to October.

Pony Pasture Rapids Park, on river right, has canoe steps, restrooms, and drinking water. Rocks and shoreline are often crowded in the summer. It is a 1 mile walk to Forest Hill Avenue with a 7-Eleven store, Hardees, and McDonalds. This is the put-in for the popular 3½ mile scenic route with Class I and II rapids and is the canoe route to Reedy Creek.

At **Reedy Creek Take-out**, look for a large white sign on a tree, on river right, visible when the rounded rocks become low and flat. A side channel leads to the James River Park Headquarters. Portable toilets and changing rooms are available. This is the last take-out before Class III rapids at Belle Isle.

Tredegar Street Canoe Access is on river left immediately past the Lee bridge (Route 1/301). Easy access to a parking lot on Tredegar Street is a benefit. A suspension walkway to Belle Isle hangs under Lee Bridge.

Tredegar Boat Access, on river left, is a rough concrete structure located at the shallow, sandy bay under the railroad trestle just before Brown's Island. It is opposite the National Park Service Civil War Center that has food and restrooms as well as interesting displays. Carry your boat inside the NPS fence and lock



JAMES RIVER INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

CITY OF RICHMOND

1. Just beyond Boshers's Dam is the **Edward Willey Bridge**, which connects Huguenot Road (Rt. 150) with River Road.

2. Rubble of stone and concrete footings of early 20th century **Westham Bridge**.

3. Canoe Access Steps at **Huguenot Flatwater Park** (a section of James River Park System). Portable toilet available in late spring, summer, and fall.

4. **Rattlesnake Creek** (no rattlesnakes) marks end of Huguenot Flatwater Park.

5. **Z Dam** (William's Dam south channel) note the fishway cut through dam 100 feet off right shoreline. This can be run by skilled canoeists at water level below 5 feet at Westham Gage. Normal portage route around dam is on river left. Good fishing site.

6. **Williams Island** is a wildlife sanctuary and part of James River Park System. Site of only bald eagle nest in a capital city in the lower 48 states; look also for osprey and herons.

7. **Riverside Meadow Park** has a walk/bike area on right just below Z Dam. Midway between this park and the rocks of the Pony Pasture Rapids Park, about ¼ of the way from the south shore, is a 15-foot deep depression about 200 feet long in the river bed that often holds big flat head and blue catfish that can be seen with snorkeling gear.

8. **Pony Pasture Rapids Park** part of the James River Park System has canoe access, restrooms, and drinking water. Rocks and shoreline are often crowded in summer. One mile walk to Forest Hill Avenue with 7-Eleven store, Hardees, and McDonalds. This is the put-in for popular 3 ½ mile, small rapids canoe route to Reedy Creek.

9. **Williams Dam** provides back up water supply for City of Richmond. Crude portage trail exists around dam, on river right; rocky channel back to main stem of river. This is also a good fishing spot.

10. White mansion on river left is **Locke Island**, built on Dead Man's Hill for Ambassador Walter Rice, and designed by Richard Neutia, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. It is reminiscent of his famous Falling Water structure in PA.

11. **Willow Oaks Golf Course** (private facility).

12. **Powhite Ledges** are small rapids most of the year; confusing passage at low water. Note shell of small concrete building on river left, which are the remains of the turn of the century facility that put chlorination into the city's drinking water and knocked out most typhoid fever in the city. Sometimes a good picnic or rest site.

13. **Powhite Bridge** - large, modern, concrete highway bridge. Canoe route is along river left, usually under second pylons from north shore.

14. **Atlantic-Coast Line Railroad Bridge** is a turn of the century bridge with huge concrete arches meant to mimic the aquaducts of Europe. Note Class III rapids about 100 yards after the bridge (Choo Choo Rapids). The route then swings over to the south shore (river right).

15. **Pipeline Crossing**, a flat, concrete span that looks like a low dam, follows Coopers Island on left and swings in front of you to river right. In between these two crossings



Lee Bridge and pedestrian suspension bridge to from Tredegar Street to Belle Isle.
Photo: David Euerette ©

is a pleasant rock garden of riffles and small rapids. The large brick bell tower on the left, **The Carillon in Byrd Park**, is a memorial to victims of W.W.I.

16. **Boulevard Bridge** is an old, green metal frame bridge built in the 1920s to develop south shore farm land. This area is now referred to as Westover Hills.

17. Brownstone Victorian house peeking through the wooded skyline on river left is the **Dooley Mansion**. It is the former home of Irish American businessman who gave his home and extensive gardens to the city, now known as **Maymont Park and Nature Center**.

18. **Mitchell's Gut** is a long series of small rapids with many big, rounded rocks on either side, beginning about 100 yards after the picnic shelter on river right. Main route is about ¼ of the way from the south shore and is often marked by people fishing and sunbathing.

19. At **Reedy Creek Take Out** look for a large white sign on tree, on river right, visible when the rounded rocks change to low and flat. This channel leads to the James River Park System Headquarters (often closed). This is the end of the easy, popular canoe route. Portable toilet and changing room is available. **Note:** This is the last exit before big rapids at Belle Isle. **The next few miles are NOT recommended for inexperienced paddlers!**

20. **Belle Isle and Belle Isle Dam** has flood debris on river right, which marks south wing of dam; the island is straight ahead. **First Break Rapids** is the channel that hugs the northwest tip of the island. Flat rocks make going to shore easy here. (**Note:** There are several other breaks in the dam further to the left that are popular with kayakers, but not as easily reached nor as suitable for canoes and average canoeists.) Belle Isle was infamous during the Civil War as a cruel prison camp. Today, it is a very popular park with rock climbing, mountain biking, and excellent views of rocks and rapids.

21. **Approach Rapids** contains a series of moderate rapids along the shoreline of the island passing by Grateful Dead Rock (note painted symbol of rock band painted on flat rock) and then the flat rocks at Hollywood Rapids. Get out at rocks below here to scout the Class III drop ahead!

22. **Hollywood Rapids** consists of a steep drop with a pillow rock at the bottom that divides the current. The main flow goes left, but often wraps boats of novice canoers. It is easier to cheat to the right, but you lose the main channel. Beginners/novices should portage this.

23. **Lee Bridge** is a large, concrete, modern bridge. Note the suspended walkway that provides pedestrian and bicycle access from Tredegar Street on the north shore to Belle Isle. On the right are the ruins of the car bridge (once 1880s train bridge) that serviced the Old Dominion Iron & Steel Company on the island.

24. **Canoe take out** steps, on river left, immediately past the bridge. Easy access to a parking lot on Tredegar Street.

25. **Tredegar Boat Ramp** is a rough, concrete structure located at the shallow, sandy bay under the railroad trestle, on river left, just before Brown's Island. It is opposite the National Park Service Civil War Center, which has food and restrooms as well as interesting displays. Carry your boat inside the NPS fence and lock it near the parking attendant. Brick buildings are the remains of The Tredegar Iron Works, the Old South's only large iron factory. It cast the armor for the ironclad warship the, Virginia (Merrimac), that fought the Monitor in the Chesapeake Bay.

26. **The VEPCO Levee** once pushed water into the **Haxall Canal** that carves out Brown's Island from the mainland, and once powered the largest flour mill in the world, the seven story high Gallego Mills. Note channel under this



adjustable dam is marked with a sign; all other routes have nasty rocks and rebar. **Brown's Island** is a popular park for festivals and marks the beginning of the Canal Walk.

27. **Fishway Rapids and Pipeline Rapids** consists of a hole in the Manchester Dam (located just beyond and to the right of the VEPCO Levee) and allows shad to move upstream in the spring. This main current becomes a series of rapids that follow a large steel pipe with a walkway on top. **Warning:** between about 7 and 8 feet, at the Westham gauge, the river develops a deadly cross-current that can sweep boaters into a strainer on the left from which there is no escape.

28. Old stone bridge pillars are the remnants of the **Richmond and Petersburg Railroad Bridge**. The wide abutment on the south shore is a popular rock climbing site called the **Manchester Wall**. It is visible on river right just after the VEPCO Levee and before the Manchester Bridge.

29. **Manchester Bridge (9th St. Bridge)** is a very large, modern, concrete and green steel bridge that leads to State Capitol and City Hall on river left (out of sight).

30. **Second Break Rapids** begin with a large hole on the south side of the river in the Manchester Dam (not the one nearest to shore). This is the preferred high water route for moderately skilled whitewater boaters. The main current (**Southside Rapids**) follows the south shore. (Some kayakers take a central route down through the **Devils Kitchen**.) A huge number of fish-eating birds gather on the rocks below the Manchester Dam in April and May during the fish migration.



Hitting the whitewater in the class III-IV rapids with the City skyline in the background. Richmond is the only city in the U.S. with class IV rapids within its city limits.
Photo: David Euerette ©

31. The city's **Concrete Floodwall**, with walkway on top, protects the low-lying industrial land in south Richmond. The riprap holds down the top of the wall and provides a unique birthing sanctuary for water snakes (harmless).

*Kayaking in the City of Richmond is a favorite pastime of adventure-seekers.
Photo: David Euerette ©*

32. **Shad Island** (first island below Second Break), the **Devil's Kitchen** (center of the river), **Bailey's Island** facing the north shore, river left, and Vauxhall Island just downstream. A spur line of the Norfolk Southern Railroad crosses over the first 3 of these islands.

33. End of Southside Rapids. **Canoe carry**, on river right, leads to small parking lot just behind floodwall on Hull St. This is not easy during high water.

34. **Mayo Bridge (14th St. Bridge/Hull Street Bridge)** was named for the Irish entrepreneur who built the first bridge in the city at this site, in 1784, and later became mayor. The current architecture is based on a bridge over the River Seine in Paris, France. This site marks the end of the 7 mile long Fall Line through Richmond. The water is flat for 100 miles from here to the Chesapeake Bay.

35. **Railway Bridge** crosses the eastern end of Mayo Island. Note the several different kinds of construction material in the bridge supports. They indicate the response to flood impacts and the increasing size and weight of locomotives.

36. **Chappel Island**, on river left, opposite Mayo Island, contains a huge concrete wall which is all that is visible of the largest underground sewage tank in the world—4 stories deep. It handles street runoff from the most heavily urbanized parts of the City.

37. On river left are huge, brick factory buildings with an elevated railway trestle in front. These are the converted remnants of the **tobacco processing factories** that made Richmond famous. They have now been adapted for elegant apartment living. The elevated **CSX Railroad** carries coal from the Appalachian Mountains to the docks at Hampton Roads. Stretching over 3miles, it is the longest freight trestle in the nation.

38. **Great Shiplock Park** contains the still operable canal gates that once provided access for sailing ships to the docks that serviced the tobacco factories and warehouses along Dock Street. This marks the end of Chappel Island where the Sewage Tank began.

39. Crumbling wooden docks and metal warehouses are located along river left. **Rockett's Landing**, recently called Mid-Water Terminal, it was once known as the main port of Richmond throughout the 19th century.



PRODUCED BY THE RICHMOND REGIONAL
PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 2005

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- ✓ Food and water - canoe trips can last hours. Bring sandwiches and snacks in a cheap cooler, in case of a tipover. Remember to include plenty to drink, but NO ALCOHOL. Alcohol has a dehydrating effect, and the combined effect of drinking, the hot sun, and the work of paddling is stressful. Heat stroke is a real danger.
- ✓ Wear shoes that can get wet.
- ✓ Bring along something with which to bail out the canoe.
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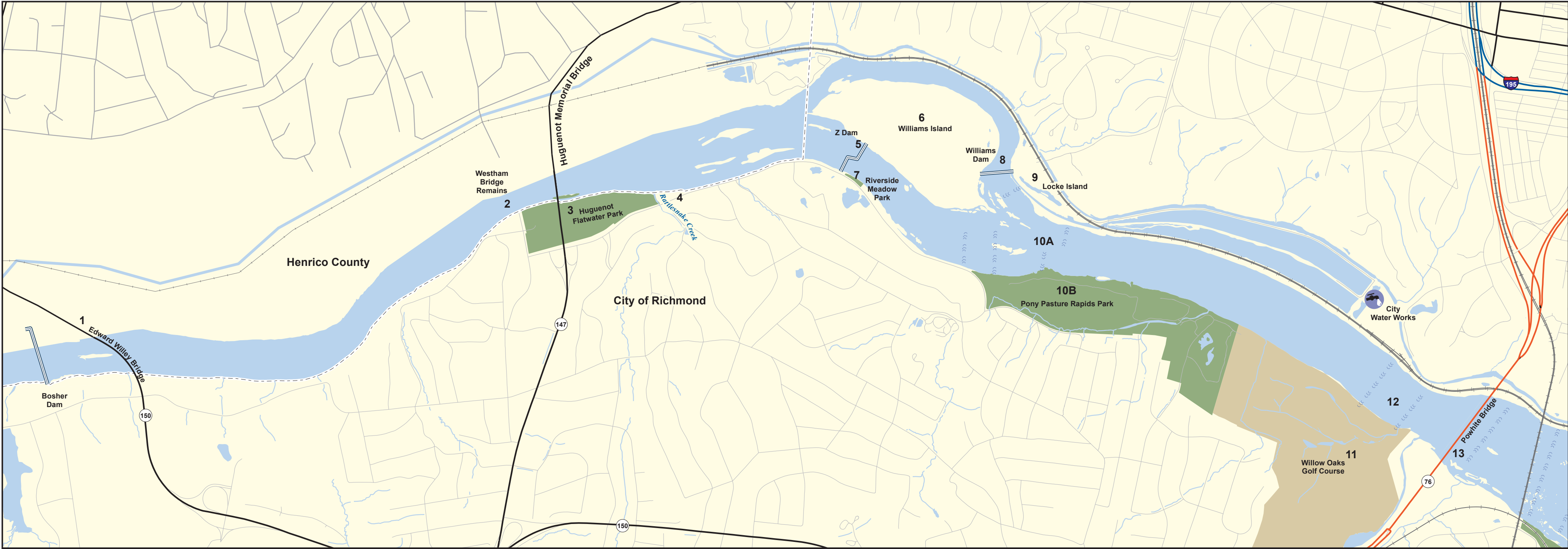
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Enjoy the beauty of the
James River with care.

it near the parking attendant booth.



- Parking
- Country Club
- City Water Works
- Rapid
- Interstate
- Road
- Park
- Playground
- Boat Ramp
- Dam
- Highway
- Railroad
- James River Park
- Historical
- Water
- Floodwall
- Major Road



Data Sources: US Census Bureau, 2002
City of Richmond, 2005
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Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, September 2005
This map was partially funded by the Coastal Program of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality through NOAA grant # NA04NOS41900600-05



River Rapids Key		
Key	Name	Class
10 A	Pony Pasture	II
12	Powhite Ledges	II
15A	Choo Choo	II
15B	Cooper's Riffle	II
18	Mitchell's Gut	II
20A	First Break	II
21	Approach	II
22	Hollywood	IV
26A	Veppo Levee	III
27A	Fishway	II
27B	Pipeline	IV
30A	Second Break	IV
30B	Southside	III